



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
MAYOR'S OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
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Case #: ZBA 2016-148
Date: February 23, 2017
Recommendation: Conditional Approval

PLANNING STAFF REPORT

Site: 39 Murdock Street

Applicant Name: Ballas Group LLC c/o Stephen Ballas
Applicant Address: 75 Paul Gore Street, Suite 2, Boston, MA 02130
Owners Name: Subash Bansal and Anuradha Sharma
Owners Address: 39 Murdock Street, Somerville, MA 02144
Agent Name: Sean T. O'Donovan,
Agent Address: 741 Broadway, Somerville, MA 02144
Alderman: Mark Niedergang

Legal Notice: Applicant, Ballas Group LLC, and Owners, Subash Bansal and Anuradha Sharma, seek a Special Permit under SZO §9.13 for parking relief to construct a three-family dwelling structure. RB Zone. Ward 5.

Dates of Public Hearing: Zoning Board of Appeals – March 1, 2017



I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

1. Subject Property: The locus is located on the southern side of Murdock Street and consists of a 6,014 square foot parcel. The current use of the locus is a one-story single family dwelling of approximately 968 square feet of net floor area.
2. Proposal: The proposal is to demolish the existing single family dwelling and construct a new

three-family dwelling and three sets of tandem parking spaces. Unit #1 is proposed to occupy a portion of the basement and the first floor and will contain four bedrooms, Unit #2, and Unit #3 will occupy the second and third floor respectively and each contains three bedrooms.

3. Green Building Practices: The application states that the proposal will meet or exceed the stretch code.

4. Comments:

Ward Alderman: Alderman Niedergang has conducted a neighborhood meeting on this proposal where neighbors expressed their concern over the height of the building and the lack of off-street parking spaces. The first proposal included a gable roof with a height of 40' (peak height was 46') and included three-parking spaces. After the neighborhood meeting the proposal was revised to show a flat roof with a height of 37' – 4" and three sets of tandem spaces that could accommodate six vehicles.

II. FINDINGS FOR SPECIAL PERMIT (SZO §9.13):

In order to grant a special permit, the SPGA must make certain findings and determinations as outlined in §5.1.4 of the SZO. This section of the report goes through §5.1.4 in detail.

1. Information Supplied:

The Staff finds that the information provided by the Applicant conforms to the requirements of §5.1.2 of the SZO and allows for a comprehensive analysis of the project with respect to the required Special Permits.

2. Compliance with Standards: *The Applicant must comply "with such criteria or standards as may be set forth in this Ordinance which refer to the granting of the requested special permit."*

Nature of Application: SZO §9.13 allows for sites with nonconforming parking to apply for a Special Permit to modify parking requirements if the total number of spaces is less than six. The locus is currently nonconforming with respect to the number of required off-street parking spaces as two are required for the existing single family dwelling and only one is provided. The existing driveway is 17.1 feet wide where an 18 foot wide driveway is required for two off-street parking spaces.

3. Consistency with Purposes: *The Applicant has to ensure that the project "is consistent with (1) the general purposes of this Ordinance as set forth in Article 1, and (2) the purposes, provisions, and specific objectives applicable to the requested special permit which may be set forth elsewhere in this Ordinance, such as, but not limited to, those purposes at the beginning of the various Articles."*

The proposal is consistent with the general purposes of the Ordinance as set forth under §1.2, which includes, but is not limited to promote the health, safety, and welfare of the inhabitants of the City of Somerville; to provide for and maintain the uniquely integrated structure of uses in the City; to lessen congestion in the streets; to protect health; to secure safety from fire, panic and other dangers; to prevent the overcrowding of land; to avoid undue concentration of population; to conserve the value of land and buildings; to adequately protect the natural environment; to encourage the most appropriate use of land throughout the City; and to preserve and increase the amenities of the municipality."

The proposal is consistent with the purpose of the RB district, which is, “To establish and preserve medium density neighborhoods of one-, two- and three-family homes, free from other uses except those which are both compatible with and convenient to the residents of such districts.”

In considering a special permit under §9.13 of the SZO “the SPGA may grant such a special permit only when consistent with the purposes set forth in Section 9.1, and upon reaching the findings and determinations set forth in Section 5.1.4”. The proposal includes three sets of tandem spaces, which can accommodate six vehicles. However, to increase the amount of landscaping on the site Staff recommends a condition that the back space in each tandem set be constructed of grasscrete pavers. Staff finds that granting the requested Special Permit is consistent with the purposes of SZO §9.1 and will not cause detriment to increased traffic volumes, traffic congestion of queuing of vehicles, changes in the type of traffic, change in traffic patterns and access to the site, reduction in on-street parking, or unsafe conflicts of motor vehicles and pedestrian traffic.

4. Site and Area Compatibility: *The Applicant has to ensure that the project "(i)s designed in a manner that is compatible with the characteristics of the built and unbuilt surrounding area, including land uses."*

Surrounding Neighborhood: The surrounding land uses and structures are single, two-, and three-family dwellings with flat, gable, and gambrel roof types.

Impacts of Proposal (Design and Compatibility): The flat roof design is designed in a manner that is compatible and consistent with the characteristics of the built surrounding area.

5. Adverse environmental impacts: *The proposed use, structure or activity will not constitute an adverse impact on the surrounding area resulting from: 1) excessive noise, level of illumination, glare, dust, smoke, or vibration which are higher than levels now experienced from uses permitted in the surrounding area; 2) emission of noxious or hazardous materials or substances; 3) pollution of water ways or ground water; or 4) transmission of signals that interfere with radio or television reception.*

Impacts of Proposal (Environmental): There are no adverse environmental impacts anticipated as a result of granting the Special Permit.

6. Vehicular and pedestrian circulation: *The circulation patterns for motor vehicles and pedestrians which would result from the use or structure will not result in conditions that create traffic congestion or the potential for traffic accidents on the site or in the surrounding area.*

Impacts of Proposal (Circulation): The proposed driveway and parking spaces are designed and located in such a manner that the circulation patterns for motor vehicles and pedestrian will not result in conditions that create traffic congestion or the potential for traffic accidents on the site or in the surrounding area.

7. Housing Impact: *Will not create adverse impacts on the stock of existing affordable housing.*

There will be no adverse impacts on the stock of existing affordable housing.

8. SomerVision Plan: *Complies with the applicable goals, policies and actions of the SomerVision plan, including the following, as appropriate: Preserve and enhance the character of Somerville's neighborhoods, transform key opportunity areas, preserve and expand an integrated, balanced mix of safe, affordable and environmentally sound rental and homeownership units for households of all sizes*

and types from diverse social and economic groups; and, make Somerville a regional employment center with a mix of diverse and high-quality jobs. The areas in the SomerVision map that are designated as enhance and transform should most significantly contribute towards the SomerVision goals that are outlined in the table below. The areas marked as conserve are not expected to greatly increase the figures in the table since these areas are not intended for large scale change.

The proposal will preserve the neighborhood as a residential pocket within the city and will enhance the overall aesthetics of the site and the greater neighborhood.

<u>SomerVision Summary</u>	<i>Existing</i>	<i>Proposed</i>
<i>Dwelling Units:</i>	1	3
<i>Parking Spaces:</i>	1	3 (6 in tandem)

III. RECOMMENDATION

Special Permit under §9.13

Based on the materials submitted by the Applicant, the above findings and subject to the following conditions, the Planning Staff recommends **CONDITIONAL APPROVAL** of the requested **SPECIAL PERMIT**.

The recommendation is based upon a technical analysis by Planning Staff of the application material based upon the required findings of the Somerville Zoning Ordinance, and is based only upon information submitted prior to the public hearing. This report may be revised or updated with new recommendations, findings and/or conditions based upon additional information provided to the Planning Staff during the public hearing process.

#	Condition	Timeframe for Compliance	Verified (initial)	Notes								
1	Approval is for parking relief to construct a three-family dwelling. This approval is based upon the following application materials and the plans submitted by the Applicant:	BP/CO	ISD/Plng.									
	<table><tr><th>Date (Stamp Date)</th><th>Submission</th></tr><tr><td>December 12, 2016</td><td>Initial application submitted to the City Clerk's Office</td></tr><tr><td>February 7, 2017</td><td>Modified plans submitted to OSPCD (T-1, Z-1, Z-2, Z-3, A-0, A-1, A-2, A-3, A-4, A-5, A-6, A-7, and A-8)</td></tr><tr><td>November 7, 2016</td><td>Certified Plot Plan submitted to OSPCD</td></tr></table>				Date (Stamp Date)	Submission	December 12, 2016	Initial application submitted to the City Clerk's Office	February 7, 2017	Modified plans submitted to OSPCD (T-1, Z-1, Z-2, Z-3, A-0, A-1, A-2, A-3, A-4, A-5, A-6, A-7, and A-8)	November 7, 2016	Certified Plot Plan submitted to OSPCD
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November 7, 2016	Certified Plot Plan submitted to OSPCD											
Any changes to the approved site plan or elevations/use that are not <i>de minimis</i> must receive SPGA approval.												
Pre-Construction												

2	New sanitary connection flows over 2,000 GPD require a removal of infiltration and/or inflow by the Applicant. This will be achieved by submitting a mitigation payment, established by the City Engineers Office, to the City based on the cost per gallon of I/I to be removed from the sewer system and a removal ratio of 4:1. If a different ratio of removal or mitigation payment amount is adopted by the Board of Aldermen prior to the Applicant receiving a Certificate of Occupancy, payment will be adjusted to the BOA rate. The Applicant shall work with Engineering and meet this condition before a certificate of occupancy is issued.	BP	Eng.	
3	The Applicant shall develop a demolition plan in consultation with the City of Somerville Inspectional Services Division. Full compliance with proper demolition procedures shall be required, including timely advance notification to abutters of demolition date and timing, good rodent control measures (i.e. rodent baiting), minimization of dust, noise, odor, and debris outfall, and sensitivity to existing landscaping on adjacent sites.	Demolition Permitting	ISD	
Construction Impacts				
4	The applicant shall post the name and phone number of the general contractor at the site entrance where it is visible to people passing by.	During Construction	Plng.	
5	Approval is subject to the Applicant's and/or successor's right, title and interest in the property.	Cont.	Plng.	Deed submitted & application form signed
6	The Applicant shall at their expense replace any existing equipment (including, but not limited to street sign poles, signs, traffic signal poles, traffic signal equipment, wheel chair ramps, granite curbing, etc) and the entire sidewalk immediately abutting the subject property if damaged as a result of construction activity. All new sidewalks and driveways must be constructed to DPW standard.	CO	DPW	
7	All construction materials and equipment must be stored onsite. If occupancy of the street layout is required, such occupancy must be in conformance with the requirements of the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices and the prior approval of the Traffic and Parking Department must be obtained.	During Construction	T&P	
Design				
8	Applicant shall provide final material samples for siding, trim, windows, and doors to Planning Staff for review and approval prior to construction.	BP	Plng.	
9	An exterior light and electrical receptacle is required for the first (or all) level of the porch and an electrical receptacle is required for the second level (if there is no access to the ground).	Final sign off	Wiring Inspector	
Site				

10	Landscaping should be installed and maintained in compliance with the American Nurserymen's Association Standards;	Perpetual	Plng. / ISD	
11	There shall be a minimum of one tree for each 1,000 sf of required landscaped area under SZO §10.3.	CO	Plng. / ISD	
12	The electric, telephone, cable TV and other such lines and equipment shall be placed underground from the source or connection. The utilities plan shall be supplied to the Wiring Inspector before installation.	Installation of Utilities	Wiring Inspector	
13	All new sidewalks will be installed by the Applicant in accordance with the specifications of the Highway Superintendent. Specifically, all driveway aprons shall be concrete;	CO	Plng.	
14	Snow plowed from the development shall be limited to the on-site storage area as shown in plan.	Cont.	ISD.	
Traffic & Parking				
15	Each of the three sets of tandem spaces shall be designated to each of the respective dwelling units.	Perpetual	Plng. / ISD	
16	The back space in each tandem set shall be constructed of grasscrete pavers.	CO	Plng. / ISD	
Miscellaneous				
17	The Applicant, its successors and/or assigns, shall be responsible for maintenance of both the building and all on-site amenities, including landscaping, fencing, lighting, parking areas and storm water systems, ensuring they are clean, well kept and in good and safe working order.	Cont.	ISD	
Public Safety				
18	The Applicant or Owner shall meet the Fire Prevention Bureau's requirements.	CO	FP	
19	To the extent possible, all exterior lighting must be confined to the subject property, cast light downward and must not intrude, interfere or spill onto neighboring properties.	CO	Plng.	
20	The Applicant shall provide notice of intent to strictly comply with applicable State and Federal regulations regarding air quality including without limitation continuous dust control during demolition and construction.	CO	Plng/OSE	
Signage				
21	Signage will be limited in size and location to that shown in the elevation diagrams and lighting after 10p.m. facing residential property will be turned down or off.	CO/Cont.	Plng.	
Final Sign-Off				
22	The Applicant shall contact Planning Staff at least five working days in advance of a request for a final inspection by Inspectional Services to ensure the proposal was constructed in accordance with the plans and information submitted and the conditions attached to this approval.	Final sign off	Plng.	

